

Application No.: 10/608452

Docket No.: TOW-030RCE

REMARKS

Applicants amend claims 1-12. No new matter is added. Support for the claim amendments can be found throughout the specification and at least at Figs. 2-8 and its related text. Claims 1-12 are pending, of which claims 1, 6, 11, and 12 are independent. Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims define over the art of record.

Applicants thank the Examiner for taking the time to conduct a telephone interview with Applicants' attorney. The claim amendments are made in line with the discussion during the telephone interview. Specifically, the claim amendments are made to clarify that the invention is directed to multiple fuel cell stacks.

Claimed Invention

Applicants amend the pending claims to clarify the claimed invention. Independent claims 1, 6, 11, and 12 recite *a first stack* having a plurality of unit cells and *a second stack* having a plurality of unit cells, *the second stack being separate from the first stack*. Hence, the claimed invention requires at least two fuel cell stacks. In order to connect the fuel gas passages, oxygen-containing gas passages, or coolant passages between the multiple fuel cell stacks, a fuel gas outlet/inlet passage, a oxygen-containing gas outlet/inlet passage, and a coolant passage are provided, respectively, *outside of the first and second stacks* to connect the corresponding passages between the first and second stacks. Additionally, a fuel gas adjusting mechanism, oxygen-containing gas adjusting mechanism, coolant adjusting mechanism connecting to the fuel gas outlet/inlet passage, oxygen-containing gas outlet/inlet passage, coolant passage, respectively, can be provided to control the flow rate and direction of fuel gas, oxygen-containing gas, and coolant, respectively.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0186093 to St-Pierre et al. (hereafter "St-Pierre").

Applicants respectfully submit that the St-Pierre reference does not disclose *a first stack and a second stack*, where the second stack is separate from the first stack, as required by

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independent claims 1, 6, 11, and 12. The St-Pierre reference only discloses a single fuel cell system. See Fig. 6. Furthermore, the St-Pierre reference does not disclose a fuel gas outlet/inlet passage *outside* of the first and second stacks and *connecting* the fuel gas passages of the multiple stacks, as required by independent claims 1 and 6. The St-Pierre reference also does not disclose an oxygen-containing gas outlet/inlet passage *outside* of the first and second stacks and *connecting* the oxygen-containing gas outlet/inlet passage *outside* of the first and second stacks and *connecting* the oxygen-containing gas passages of the first and second stacks, as required by independent claim 11. The St-Pierre reference further does not disclose a coolant passage outlet/inlet passage *outside* of the first and second stacks and *connecting* the coolant passages of the first and second stacks, as required by independent claim 12.

Accordingly, the St-Pierre reference fails to disclose each and every element and limitation of independent claims 1, 6, 11 and 12. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 6, 11, and 12.

Applicants respectfully note that the dependent claims also recite separate patentable subject matter. As such, for this and the reasons set forth above, the dependent claims also define over the art of record.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicants submit herewith a petition for one-month extension of time and a Request for Continued Examination. Applicants believe no other fee is due with this statement. However, if additional fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. TOW-030RCE from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

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